

East Yegua Creek (1212B) Recreational Use Attainability Analysis Summary and Recommendation

A recreational use attainability analysis (RUAA) was conducted on East Yegua Creek (1212B) in the summer of 2010 to determine the appropriate recreational use and numeric criteria. East Yegua Creek is an unclassified perennial water body in central Texas, approximately 42 miles in length. It is currently listed on the 2010 Texas Clean Water Act Section 303(d) List of Impaired Water Bodies due to elevated bacteria levels, and was initially listed in 2002.

The RUAA identified that the presumed use of primary contact recreation (PCR) for East Yegua Creek should be revised to secondary contact 1 (SCR 1). SCR 1 applies to water bodies where water recreation can occur, but the nature of the recreation does not involve a significant risk of ingestion. SCR 1 applies to intermittent and perennial freshwaters where site-specific information demonstrates that primary contact recreation has little to no likelihood of occurring due to physical characteristics of the water body such as shallow depths or lack of pools.

During the field surveys contractors did not observe any type of recreation occurring on the stream. Interviews of landowners conducted during the study identified fishing and hunting as the recreation activities and did not report PCR as a use for the stream. Others interviewed in the watershed witnessed fishing, hunting and canoeing on the stream but no other recreational activities. Indications of human use along the stream consisted of fishing tackle, bait boxes and shotgun shells. Physical characteristics of the stream include an average thalweg of 0.4 meters (15.75 in), pools greater than one meter deep and had an average flow of 37.8 cubic feet per second. The stream flows through a rural watershed and is accessible to the general public via five bridge crossings, Somerville Wildlife Management Area and a satellite unit of Lake Somerville State Park.

Natural water levels and limited accessibility decrease the likelihood of primary contact recreation use. There are few public road crossings and a shallow average depth, supporting reclassification to SCR1. Secondary Contact Recreation 2 is not justified, given the publicly accessible wildlife management area on the stream and presence of pools greater than one meter deep. In accordance with §307.4 (j) (3)(C) of the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards the TCEQ recommends a reclassification of the contact recreation use to secondary contact recreation 1 and a corresponding geometric mean of 630 colonies/100mL for all of East Yegua Creek from the confluence with Middle Yegua and Yegua Creeks southeast of Dime Box in Lee County to the upstream portion of the stream, south of Alcoa Lake in Milam County due to “natural, ephemeral, intermittent low flow conditions or water levels” in accordance with reasons specified in 40 CFR §131.10(g)(2).

Prior to changing the currently assigned recreational use of East Yegua Creek in the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards, the TCEQ would provide additional public notice and opportunity for public comment; and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency would review this proposed change under the provisions of the federal Clean Water Act.

